

Valley High School 150 North Center P.O. Box 128 Orderville, Utah 84758

April 12, 2007





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Valley High School 150 North Center P.O. Box 128 Orderville, Utah 84758

April 12, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 12, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Valley High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Jim Wood is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Valley High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Valley High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Stephanie Williams	District School Nurse

VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Jim Wood Ferril Heaton				
Counseling				
Bill Sorbe		Counselor		
Support Staff				
Karren Nemrow		Administrative Assistant		
Wayne Cox				
Sheldon Roundy				
Pat Crofts		Custodian		
Jeanie Goulding		Librarian		
Jeanette Esplin				
Shana Sawyer		Special Ed Aide		
MaryAnn Smith		Special Ed Aide		
Colene Brinkerhoff				
Joy Heaton		Special Ed Aide		
Kay Willardson		Work-Based Learning		
Lisa Livingston		ETS		
Melissa Veator		PEP		
Fo cultur				
Faculty				
Jeff Cox	Wanda Heaton	Dave Nemrow		
Alan DeMille	Jim Hoyt	DeAnna Reeve		
Tia Hardy	Heather Konopelski			
B 1111 /	T 3.7 11			

Jana Maxwell

Ferril Heaton

VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Commitment to life long learning and accountability to self and society.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- 1. We believe students have a variety of leaning styles and emotional needs but that all can learn given sufficient time, appropriate evaluative assessments, and consistent mentoring.
- 2. We believe that students have accountability in their educational endeavors.
- 3. We believe that students can become life long learners if they have parental support and involvement combined with a safe and engaging environment in which to learn.
- 4. We believe that students can be trained to be self-directed and to acquire critical thinking, problem solving, and self-evaluation skills.
- 5. We believe that curriculum should be data-driven accompanied by measurable goals and strategies which are continually reviewed and revised.
- 6. We believe that all students should acquire "employable skills" through real-life, technological, and hands-on learning experiences.
- 7. We believe that students can be trained and encouraged to become accountable citizens who actively participate in a changing, diverse society.
- 8. We believe in providing co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities to assist students in developing their potential abilities and skills as well as self-confidence and self-esteem.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Roy L. Hoyt, Hurricane High School, Washington County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Tim Lowe, Dixie High School, Washington County School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Valley High School is located in Orderville, Utah and surrounded by the beautiful Carmel Mountains for which the area is known. The school has been in existence for many years and has been located in or near the same area since 1923. The students of Valley High School are residents of a rural area and come from five distinct communities: Mt. Carmel and the surrounding area (extending to Zion National Park), Orderville, Glendale, Alton, and the mountain area west of Highway 89 to the Iron County line (including Swains Creek, Strawberry Valley, and Duck Creek Village). The main sources of income are farming, ranching, family-owned businesses, and some tourist enterprises.

Valley High School is a rural public school containing grades 7 through 12. The enrollment has declined over the past few years due to decline in the logging and mining industries. Valley High School has been fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools since 1977. For a number of years the faculty was the "oldest" in the district, averaging the longest number of years taught in the district. During the 2005-06 school year, the average number of years teaching for the 11 faculty members was nearly 19 years; currently, with the change in personnel, the average is a little over 15 years.

The Old Rock Schoolhouse in Orderville was the home of Valley High until a new building was erected in 1923. At that time the students graduated after the eighth grade, but soon a ninth, a tenth, an eleventh, and a twelfth grade were added. In 1937, a new building was constructed and the school was moved to it. It sat on the hill just northwest of the present-day location. Through the years, and in spite of building changes and new classrooms, Valley High School has maintained its spirit and its role as the centerpiece of life in Long Valley. In 1956 a new gymnasium and music room were built just south of the high school. In 1983, a new high school was constructed and connected directly to the gymnasium and music room. The new school had seven classrooms, an expanded library, a small theater, and an office with an attached workroom and teachers' lounge. The building served the high school in this form until 2001, when another addition was constructed

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

Demographic data reveals that the total enrollment of Valley High School is 148 students, which is 22 percent lower than six years ago. The loss of jobs in the area is a primary reason for this decrease. The student population has experienced no significant shifts in the percentage of racial and ethnic groups represented. Of the total population of 148, 99 percent are Caucasian and only one percent Hispanic.

The number of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch has decreased over the past six years, from 40 to 35 percent.

Valley High School has a high percentage of students who participate in extracurricular activities. The school offers seven varsity athletic activities as well as drama, National Honor Society, FFA, FCCLA, and Sterling Scholar. In the past they have had a strong music program; however, as of the 2006-07 school year the school has been unable to hire a music teacher. They are hoping to hire a qualified music teacher for the coming year.

The NSSE opinion survey indicates that Valley High School provides students and teachers with a safe and orderly environment for learning. Both parents and students believe that Valley High School provides students with educational programs that are appropriate to their learning needs. The most surprising finding was the response, "I look forward to going to school each day." About the same number of students, 35 percent, stated that they didn't look forward to coming to school as much.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team recommends that Valley High School continue and extend its efforts to systematically collect and analyze relevant data in order to guide decision making in relation to instruction and curriculum.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Data should include the patterns of low-performing students based on standardized and classroom-based assessments. The school might consider disaggregating the data to reflect gender and free/reduced students, etc.
- Valley High might consider grade distribution to determine whether there is grade inflation, as well as comparison of classroom grades to other assessments such as CRT and ACT scores.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The self-study had some involvement from community and students. Stakeholders were involved with the perception data about the school, and the administration

shared the data with parents. Other aspects of the self-study had limited involvement from students.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The work completed shows an effort to identify areas of strength at Valley High School. Most members of the staff were involved in aspects of the self-analysis. It is recommended that Valley High School's self-study include the use of data to direct the decision-making process, monitor progress toward the school DRSLs, and guide the activities of departments, focus groups, and the school leadership.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Valley High school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

- Effective communication skills—successfully uses printed, written, oral, and visual forms of communication to express personal views; successfully uses listening and feedback when interacting with others.
- Effective collaboration and teaming skills—works with others to identify, generate, and solve problems, takes a variety of roles in the process, and sets and achieves objectives and goals using a variety of strategies.
- Effective complex thinking skills—uses a variety of critical and creative thinking skills to locate resources, solve complex problems individually and collaboratively, to become flexible and adaptive in diverse situations, and to use self-evaluation as a tool for progress.
- Effective technology skills—is literate in a variety of technology media, equipment, and materials, and is able to meet or exceed performance expectations in "real world" contexts by participating in hands-on experiences which lead to real-life employable skills.
- Responsible citizen—participates actively in ethically (both individually and collaboratively) in activities to promote the "general good" on local and global levels, is accountable for self, and encourages tolerance in a diverse culture.
- Effective life skills and continuous learning—identifies, sets, and completes personal goals; develops a balance between educational achievement and career goals; pushes personal limits to take the risk of something new or different; has learned self-management in a variety of situations; and participates in real-life and

hands-on learning experiences which prepare individual to be successful in the workplace as well as in academic settings.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The administration, faculty, and staff at Valley High School used a consensus-building process in defining the school's vision statement, but provided a limited role for other stakeholders in the process. The school spent an extensive amount of time reviewing its beliefs, and after several revisions of the mission statement, they were able to produce brief, learnable, and catchy mission and belief statements that were reviewed with other stakeholders after they were created.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The administration, faculty, and staff at Valley High School created a viable set of beliefs that are comprehensive and address key issues pertinent to effective decision-making and policy development in the school. The mission statement describes the purpose and direction of the school, with a focus on student learning as a top priority at Valley High School.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The school's DRSLs align directly to the beliefs and mission statement. These beliefs reflect the school community's desire for students to be critical thinkers, responsible citizens, effective communicators, and lifelong learners. The Visiting team encourages the staff to develop a means of assessing the success of the DRSLs.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The faculty and staff at Valley High School demonstrate a fully functioning level of implementation in the area of development of a quality curriculum. The curriculum at Valley High is based on clearly defined standards that include good

- expectations for student learning. There is an ongoing process used to evaluate the curriculum. Many of their DRSLs reflect Life Skills.
- b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The faculty and staff at Valley High School consistently demonstrate that the staff collaborates often to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?
 - It was evident to the Visiting Team that there is a concerted effort in the planning process to more fully engage students. Most teachers indicated that they constantly worked to improve how they deliver their curriculum. Discussions with students also indicated that teachers make an effort to actively involve students in the learning process.
- b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?
 - The Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional methods to engage students. A teacher survey indicated that teachers use pedagogical methods such as peer tutoring, problem solving activities, cooperative learning, and classroom discussions. Observation by the Visiting Team revealed that teachers use mentoring, hands-on activities, and simulation learning/problem solving.
- c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?
 - The school provides opportunities for students to improve and enrich their learning through expanded use of time, facilities, and instructional resources. The school has EDNET, FCCLA, FFA, and numerous other clubs and organizations that expand students learning experiences. Several students pointed out that because they were part of a small school, they were able to participate in several activities.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?
 - The school has limited school-wide assessments, but some of the classroom assessments are based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement, which in turn are based on the State Core for those classes. Teachers state objectives prior to teaching units, and several teachers have clearly articulated expectations posted in their classrooms.
- b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?
 - There is some evidence that Valley High School has developed assessments of student learning using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards. Some classroom teachers design assessments aligned to the core for their course. Some use hands-on activities aligned to the standards being taught.
- c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?
 - At Valley High School, grading assessments and practices are generally fair. Most of the sources of bias or distortion are eliminated from the assessment design and testing conditions. For the most part, performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are clearly defined and applied on an equitable basis.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?
 - The school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. Students feel valued and important.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?
 - Some of the decisions made by the school are based on validated, research-based practices and the analysis of pertinent data and information. The decision-making process is collaborative and provides opportunities for the meaningful involvement of the school's stakeholders. It was obvious to the Visiting Team that the staff is tight-knit and willing to work together for the benefit of students.

- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
 - The school makes some use of assessment and evaluation data for the purpose of improving student learning and instructional effectiveness.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?
 - School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. The school is clean and the physical environment is inviting. All of the students the Visiting Team talked with felt safe, and believed that the school staff was concerned about their success and well-being.
- e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?
 - The allocation and use of resources are aligned with the school's goals. The Visiting Team encourages the administration of the school to continue to ensure that the allocation and use of resources are aligned with the DRSLs and are supportive of the action plan.
- f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The principal has an excellent rapport with his staff, which allows for participation and collaboration for student improvement. It is through this continued staff empowerment that the components of the action plan will be completed and institutionalized.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

Valley High School does a good job of fostering community building and has a good working relationship with the school community. There is a positive and productive working relationship among students, staff, teachers, and administrators. The school definitely creates and sustains a learning environment that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging among the students.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school engages parents and families as partners in the learning process. Valley High School uses E-net and community support groups to provide networks of learning for its students.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

Valley High School's organizational system and culture are supportive of school improvement and professional development. The faculty and staff are aware of various professional development opportunities, and some take advantage of them. There is evidence that members of the faculty use professional development programs to gain new knowledge and skills.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The school has engaged in a self-evaluation study and has provided opportunities for members of the staff to be involved in productive change and continuous improvement activities. The faculty has been informed of district-level training, and several staff members have been involved in continuing education activities to gain advanced degrees.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I - Educational Program

This standard is met. Valley High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV - Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school, rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Valley High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Valley High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The Visiting Team is confident that the school-wide action plan adequately addresses the critical areas for follow-up. The school profile, department reports, and focus groups provided the school with accurate information on areas of growth, and the staff has written a reasonable action plan to address these areas.

The Visiting Team suggests that the action plan be refined by narrowing some of the goals to a reasonable time line that includes specific people on the staff who are responsible for seeing individual goals through.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The school has made an effort to include stakeholders in the accreditation process. As the school revisits and reviews the process in the future, the Visiting Team suggests that the school provide opportunities for students to participate, as this will assure school-wide commitment.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

The Visiting Team is confident that the school is committed to the continuous improvement process and understands that decisions need to be based on data. All necessary components for evaluation are in place. It is suggested that the staff members add a means of assessing/measuring the action plan. They should be able to answer the question, "How do we know what we are doing is having a positive impact on student achievement?"

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Valley High School for having created a culture that is conducive to a positive learning environment. Students feel safe and valued by the staff of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends Valley High School for providing students with a
 wide array of learning experiences. Most students were engaged in learning
 through several types of activities. Technology is updated and utilized in
 classrooms.
- The Visiting Team commends Valley High School staff members for their high level of commitment. Because the school is small and most staff members have numerous responsibilities, teachers must work long hours to fulfill the mission of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff members for their willingness to provide personalized/individual instruction to students. Students indicated that teachers are willing to spend time before and after school to ensure their success.
- The Visiting Team commends the school community for its pride and care of the school building. This reflects well on the administration, custodial staff, teachers, and students.
- The Visiting Team recognizes a great sense of unity and support for one another that includes a willingness to collaborate and share information and ideas for the success of students.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends enlarging, disaggregating, and analyzing current data regarding implementation of the school improvement plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school modify the action plan to reflect a six-year improvement plan. Rather than say "ongoing," the action plan should reflect a definite month/year date for accomplishing each goal. Much of the action of the plan is vague and general. The school should narrow the action plan to specific items that are measurable and have specific people accountable for completion. The action plan should reflect desired future goals and activities that require additional effort to achieve.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school examine instructional practices to assure they provide engagement and relevance in the classroom.
- The Visiting Team recommends that students be involved in the formulation and review of future goals for the school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff be selective in choosing specific best practices to focus on. Combined with other goals in the action plan, one or two specific "best practices" (i.e., questioning, classroom assessment, cooperative learning, etc.) per year that can be researched, implemented, and refined will be ample effort for the faculty.